Dreams and Realities:
Developing Countries and the English Language

Edited by Hywel Coleman

Paper 1
Developing countries and the English language:
Rhetoric, risks, roles and recommendations
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Developing countries and the English language: Rhetoric, risks, roles and recommendations

Hywel Coleman

Introduction

The purpose of this book is to examine the claims that have been made for the importance of English in development, to point out where these claims do not appear to be justified, to consider whether the pursuit of English in the name of development carries with it any dangers, to identify those areas in which English really does appear to have a useful role to play and to formulate recommendations.

Some of the 15 chapters which follow this introductory chapter take a broad geographical sweep while others focus on particular countries. Fifteen countries are selected for detailed discussion, six in Asia (Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) and nine in Africa (Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia). According to the United Nations Human Development Programme (UNDP 2010), four of these 15 countries (China, Indonesia, India, Pakistan) are categorised as having Medium Human Development, one (Eritrea) cannot be classified because of insufficient data, while the remaining ten are all categorised as having Low Medium Human Development. Meanwhile, four of these countries are classified by the United Nations as being among the world's 'least developed' nations; these are DR Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Malawi. (There is some overlap between the UNDP's 'Low Human Development' category and the UN's 'least developed' category).

The 18 contributors to this book all originate from and/or are currently working in and/or have extensive previous experience in the contexts which they discuss. The contributors include among their number English teachers, development project leaders, teacher trainers, international agency personnel and researchers.

Thematic groupings

The 15 chapters are organised into five thematic groupings, which deal with policy planning and implementation; perceptions of English; social and geographic mobility; developing English in development contexts; and English in fragile contexts. Inevitably, there is overlap between the interests of the five groupings; the categories are not watertight.

Policy planning and implementation

In Chapter 2, 'Challenges for language policy, language and development', Chris Kennedy's wide-ranging contribution explores the relationships between language policy, language and development. He identifies nine challenges that emerge. These include, for example, the challenge of recognising that language may play only a subsidiary role in certain types of development projects.

Chapter 3, 'Language policy, politics and development in Africa' by Eddie Williams, is also broad in scope, looking at evidence from almost every country in Sub-Saharan Africa, but focusing in particular on Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia. Williams proposes that the failure of education to have an impact on development indicators in many African countries is due not to the lack of availability of education but, rather, to the ineffectiveness of the education which is available. The ineffectiveness of education, in turn, can be partly attributed to language policy.

Ramanujam Meganathan, in Chapter 4, 'Language policy in education and the role of English in India: From library language to language of empowerment', uses documentary evidence to create an extraordinarily complex picture of language policy in the 35 states and Union Territories in India. India's three-language policy in education is well known, but it is not until one sees the details laid out state by state as is done here – with no two states offering the same range of languages – that the complexity of the arrangement becomes apparent. Using longitudinal data, Meganathan is also able to identify the rapidly expanding role of English in education in India.

Chapter 5, the fourth contribution to the debate on language policy, is Hywel Coleman's analysis of the financial resources made available to the so-called 'international-standard schools' in Indonesia. These schools are, for the most part, state institutions and at least nominally are English medium. They constitute an elite sub-system within Indonesia's overall state education system; they are allocated very substantial block grants and are also permitted to charge fees. Coleman attempts to understand the rationale for this subsidising of English medium education.

Perceptions of English

Stakeholders' perceptions of English are an important element of several chapters in the book. Three chapters in which perceptions are a core issue – all from Africa – are gathered together in this thematic grouping.

Juliet Tembe and Bonny Norton, in Chapter 6, 'English education, local languages and community perspectives in Uganda', trace the perceptions of urban and rural communities in Uganda towards their own local languages, regional languages and English. It transpires that rural communities are generally more inclined to accept the use of mother tongues in schools than are urban communities, while urban parents are generally more insistent that their children should be involved.

Gladys Ngwi Focho, in Chapter 7, 'Student perceptions of English as a developmental tool in Cameroon', describes a very unusual situation. Unlike most of the other contexts discussed in this book, in Francophone Cameroon the secondary school students appear to have little interest in English; French provides

them with the access they need to the outside world. Focho herself, however, believes that 'the case for English for development is a compelling one' and she therefore endeavours to convince her students of this.

While Tembe and Norton in Chapter 6 and Focho in Chapter 7 focus on individual countries in Africa, Nigussie Negash, in Chapter 8, 'English in Africa: An impediment or a contributor to development?', undertakes a broad survey across the continent, though at the same time he draws substantially on evidence from Ethiopia. Negash contrasts the opinions of 'experts', who argue for caution in, for instance, adopting English as a medium of instruction in school, with the views of many of his survey interviewees and other informants, who appear to perceive English in a very positive light.

Social and geographical mobility
This thematic grouping begins with Martin Lamb's study, in Chapter 9, 'A "Matthew Effect" in English language education in a developing country context'. Lamb demonstrates, with longitudinal evidence from schools in Indonesia, that children's socio-economic background has a massive impact on their response to the learning of English. This explains why children in the same class may respond very differently to the English lessons that the school offers to them. Those from aspirational middle class families consistently improve their English language competence throughout the time they spend in school, although their success depends to a considerable extent on non-school factors, including the individual child's view of him- or herself as a future user of English. Their peers from more modest backgrounds, however, fail to make much progress in English, despite having to study it for a total of six years in secondary school. As the successful children improve their English so they increase their chances of gaining access to the best universities and future employment. Meanwhile, as their peers fail to improve their English so they gradually lose the possibility of pursuing higher education.

The second chapter in this thematic grouping, Chapter 10, 'Language and migration: The social and economic benefits of learning English in Pakistan' by Tony Capstick, addresses a very different sort of mobility. Capstick looks at the phenomenon of marriage migration between Mirpur in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) in Pakistan and several cities in the UK. This form of migration has been taking place for several decades and has led to the creation of very strong social, cultural and economic links between AJK and the cities of the North of England. Capstick looks at this phenomenon from a language perspective and in particular he considers the implications of UK legislation in 2010, which requires migrants to provide evidence of their English language competence.

The situation described by Chefera Hailemariam, Sarah Ogbay and Goodith White in Chapter 11, 'English and development in Eritrea', has some similarities with that described by Capstick in Chapter 10 in that a considerable proportion of Eritrea's population are eager to leave their country or have already done so. Eritrea, although a small nation of just over five million people (see Appendix 2), has one of the world's largest proportions of its population living abroad. More than one million Eritreans live in other parts of the world but, for the most part, they maintain

strong contacts with their homeland. As second and third generation Eritreans are born and grow up abroad, English takes on an increasingly important role as the language of communication between the diaspora and their families still in Eritrea.

Migration also features in Chapter 5, although as a subsidiary issue. Coleman notes that the huge numbers of migrant workers from Indonesia who go to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Hong Kong and elsewhere and who frequently experience great difficulty while they are abroad generally have no language training before leaving their country. Negash, Chapter 8, also discusses migration from Africa, but he pays particular attention to professional migration and the negative impact this can have on, for example, health services in migrants' home countries.

From this thematic grouping a picture emerges of the complex nature of migration. It may take place for marriage between branches of the same community which are settled in different parts of the world (Pakistan and the UK), for temporary employment (Indonesians in the Middle East), for long-term professional employment (African doctors in North America) or for political reasons. English plays a role in each of these different types of migration.

Developing English in development contexts
This thematic grouping focuses on English language teaching projects in developing countries. Philip Seargeant and Elizabeth Erling in Chapter 12, 'The discourse of "English as a language for international development": Policy assumptions and practical challenges', focus their attention on a very large project to improve the teaching of English in schools in Bangladesh. The project is funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and involves the UK Open University and the BBC, in addition to the Bangladeshi authorities. Seargeant and Erling use this opportunity to critique the project's rationale and they express concerns about the claims the project makes for the impact that it will have on the development of Bangladesh.

Martin Wedell in Chapter 13, 'More than just "technology": English language teaching initiatives as complex educational changes', expresses very similar doubts about whether the objectives of two large-scale English language teaching projects, one in Africa and one in Asia, are achievable. He then proceeds to analyse in detail why projects like this frequently fail and makes a series of recommendations for rescuing them.

In Chapter 14, 'English as the language for development in Pakistan: Issues, challenges and possible solutions', Fauzia Shamim considers a number of different aspects of the history and role of English in Pakistan. She then looks at an English language teaching project, now concluded, and considers why it achieved no long-term sustainability even though it was initially successful. Shamim concludes that there was a failure from the beginning to plan for 'maintenance strategies' in addition to the core 'development strategies' of the project.

It is instructive to note that all three of the contributions to this thematic grouping express doubts and concerns. Despite substantial financial investment and, doubtless, the hard work of the many well intentioned individuals involved in these projects, there is no sense of celebration in these accounts of English language

teaching projects. This contrasts vividly with many of the English language teaching project accounts which were produced in the early years of what we might call the 'Language and Development' movement. For example, many of the English language project accounts presented at the 1st Language and Development conference in Bangkok in 1993 (eventually published as Kenny and Savage 1997) were highly optimistic in outlook and confident that progress was being made. This suggests that Language and Development has now reached a stage of maturity where it can be more analytical and self-critical.

English in fragile contexts

The last two chapters in this book form a small thematic grouping which looks at the role of English and the scope for English language teaching in 'fragile contexts', countries which are emerging from long periods of civil strife.

Psyche Kennett, in Chapter 15, 'English as a tool for conflict transformation', describes the role that English plays in Sri Lanka after the ending of the war in the north and east of the country: government troops do not speak Tamil, refugees do not speak Sinhala, aid workers speak neither language and so they all speak English with each other. Kennett is involved in the STEPS (Skills through English for Public Servants), a project which aims to encourage communication between civil servants at the local level with the public, NGOs, international humanitarian workers and central government. Her project does not merely teach English but integrates this with the development of skills needed for negotiation and consensus seeking.

Finally, Danny Whitehead, in Chapter 16, 'English language teaching in fragile states: Justifying action, promoting success and combating hegemony', examines the role of English in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Adopting a Gramscian approach, he concludes that there is a case for English language teaching in this context as one component in a broader mother tongue-based education system.

Analysis

Cutting across the five thematic groupings are three major issues to which the contributors return repeatedly and which match the objectives of this book. These are the rhetoric regarding English in development contexts, the risks that, in some circumstances, are associated with English and the roles which English is actually able to play. We can add recommendations to this list.

Rhetoric

Here is a shocking statistic from the most recent Human Development Report (UNDP 2010; see also Appendix 2 at the end of this volume). In the 42 countries of the world which UNDP considers to be 'very highly developed', eight mothers die in childbirth for every 100,000 live births. Meanwhile, in the 23 'least developed' countries, 786 mothers die for every 100,000 live births. These two simple numbers – 8 and 786 – illustrate starkly the vast differences in opportunities and risks faced by people in the most privileged and the least privileged countries in the world. Giving birth in one of the least developed countries is one hundred times more dangerous than it is in one of the most developed.

Juxtapose this fact with the statement by a former Minister of Education of Pakistan quoted by Shamim in Chapter 14. The minister argues that the economic future of his country requires the comprehension and use of English to be as widespread as possible: 'This is now an urgent public requirement.' Shamim points out, however, that the perceived need for English in Pakistan is driven, to some extent at least, by 'folklore' and by parents' dreams about the wonderful future which their children will experience if they learn English.

So, going back to the UNDP data concerning the risks involved in childbirth, what has English got to do with this? Clearly, not very much, or at least not directly. However, language more broadly does have a very important role to play. One way in which the dreadful maternal mortality rate in the least developed countries could be reduced would be by providing far more practical training for nurses, midwives and traditional childbirth helpers in language which they understand and in language which they themselves can then use with mothers (Wariyar 2010). Very often, this will mean using a local language rather than an official language – and quite possibly a language which has never been written down, a language which has no recognised standing and which is held in low esteem. Foreign languages, however prestigious, are of no value at all in such circumstances. In many circumstances, therefore, using a local language may be a far more 'urgent public requirement' than using English.

Government pronouncements regarding the developmental importance of English – such as that quoted by Shamim – are made throughout the developing world and they are repeated frequently. Conversely, we rarely find cases of government pronouncements regarding the necessity of using local languages in order to increase the impact of public health, education and other development activities.

In Chapter 12, Seargeant and Erling use documentary evidence associated with the large English language teaching project in Bangladesh to identify an 'emergent ideology' of English for international development. This ideology takes as self-evident the idea that competence in English can be equated with economic or social development, even though the precise nature of that relationship is often unclear. Seargeant and Erling conclude that policies which are based on the assumptions inherent in this ideology are unlikely to generate positive outcomes because they fail to take into account the realities of the context in which they are to be applied.

The same ideology is identified by Williams, in Chapter 3. In many countries in Africa, he suggests, 'access to a global language such as English is a political imperative'. It is so powerful that no politician will dare to recommend that their citizens should be denied such access, however inadequate the available English language provision may be in reality.

The same phenomenon is described by Tembe and Norton, in Chapter 6. The authors note that in rural and urban schools in Uganda parents hold somewhat ambiguous attitudes towards English and local languages. Both groups are concerned that their children should be exposed to an international language – in particular English – in order to 'catch up in this fast-moving world'. At the same

time, parents recognise the value of local languages but do not necessarily feel that they should be taught and used in school.

The rhetoric of English and development is also discussed by Wedell in Chapter 13. He notes the worldwide perception that teaching English to all learners in state schools is an important way of 'increasing the human capital on which future national economic development and political power depends'. Wedell also finds little hard evidence that providing universal English language teaching brings any benefits or is cost effective.

Coleman, in Chapter 5, also identifies an ill-defined concern with 'globalisation' and 'international competition' as being the motivating force for the establishment of an English medium school system within the state education sector in Indonesia. The terms 'globalisation' and 'international competition' are repeated, mantra like, in official documents and constitute the rationale for an educational innovation which appears to give greatest benefit to an already privileged sector of society.

In India, too, the rhetoric of English for development is pervasive. In Chapter 4, Meganathan quotes a government report from 2006 which describes the English language in India as being 'a symbol of people's aspirations for quality in education and fuller participation in national and international life.' Meganathan also refers to the establishment of a temple to the 'English Goddess' which has been built by Dalit (formerly 'untouchable') villagers in Uttar Pradesh. Pandey (2011) reports on this temple in more detail, quoting a Dalit leader in the village where the temple is located:

> *English is the milk of a lioness … only those who drink it will roar. … With the blessings of Goddess English, Dalit children will not grow to serve landlords or skin dead animals or clean drains or raise pigs and buffaloes. They will grow into adjudicators and become employers and benefactors. Then the roar of the Dalits … will be heard by one and all.*

The Dalit dream is a beautiful one, yet full of pathos. When the Dalits of Uttar Pradesh are all fluent in English, who then will clean the drains and raise the livestock? Another marginalised group that has not yet learnt English? Or will the cleaning and livestock raising be carried out by people who are well rewarded and appreciated for what they do? And, before that happens, what new obstacles will have been put in the paths of the Dalit to resist their development? The plight experienced by the Dalits is caused not by their inability to speak English but by the way that Indian society is constructed.

The claims made for English and for increased use of English in education, then, are ubiquitous. But, as Grin suggests, when making claims about the social and economic value of specific languages:

> *It is important … to be absolutely unambiguous about what claims are actually being made – that is, what causal relationships are invoked and what hard facts are supposed to illustrate (if not prove) the relationship. (Grin 2009:7)*

Risks

What, next, are the risks associated with English which the contributors to this volume identify? Let us look first at another statistic from UNDP's 2010 Human Development Report. In the 42 'very highly developed' countries, the average adult has spent 11.3 years in full-time education. In the 23 'least developed' countries, on the other hand, the average adult has spent only 3.7 years in full-time education. Members of society in the least developed countries, then, are unlikely to be able to make optimum contributions to their communities if they have been educated for only one third of the duration that adults in the most developed nations have experienced (even assuming that there is no difference in the quality of the education available in the most and least developed countries – an assumption that seems unlikely to be accurate).

So once again we need to ask what role English has, if any, in reducing this huge differential. The answer appears to be that in some circumstances English may actually be contributing to the problem. It has been demonstrated that in many developing countries children are more likely to drop out of school if the school language is not the home language (Pinnock 2009), yet there is a growing trend in some countries for English to be used as the medium of instruction even in the earliest years of primary education (Coleman 2010b). In other words, in certain contexts if English is used as the medium of instruction children are less likely to complete their primary education.

Five contributors to this collection identify risks associated with the use of English in education and one looks at a case of English being used to discourage and prevent immigration into the UK.

Williams, in Chapter 3, argues that in those Sub-Saharan African countries where English is the medium of instruction and where children do not use English at home, a largely teacher-centred approach is likely to 'disadvantage children … who do not understand the teacher or the textbooks'. In the short term, children may drop out of school or may fail examinations; this has been known for a long time. But in the longer term, Williams suggests, even those who manage to satisfy all the requirements and complete primary education may still have benefited little from their education because they understood so little of it. Part of the evidence for this argument is that the death rate of children whose mothers have completed (English medium) primary education in several Sub-Saharan African countries is not very different from that of children whose mothers have no education. Williams concludes that policy makers often fail to understand how difficult it is to conduct state education 'in a language that few learners, and not all teachers, have mastered'. Similarly, policymakers 'do not appreciate the risk to national development, nor the threat to national stability' which arise from their policies.

Shamim argues, in Chapter 14, that successive governments in Pakistan have announced policies of increasing access to English with the stated aim of achieving equality of opportunity. But implementation always falls short of what is required. In consequence, English in Pakistan continues to play a gate-keeping role and effectively excludes the majority of the population from higher education and all but the most menial of jobs in the civil service. Shamim describes the situation that

has been created as one of 'linguistic apartheid'. Tariq Rahman, Pakistan's leading linguist, analyses the linguistic apartheid phenomenon in the following way:

> The ruling elite finds it in its interest to teach a few in English, most others in Urdu and not to use the people's smaller languages at all for teaching. If this is changed the power equation of this country will change also. That is why such an unjust medium of instruction policy will not change. **(Rahman 2010)**

In Chapter 4, Meganathan suggests that the rapid spread in the use of English in education in India's states and Union Territories 'further intensifies the already existing divide between English language-rich children and English language-poor children'.

Coleman, in Chapter 5, also worries that the Indonesian International School System is creating – or consolidating – a social divide between those who can afford to send their children to these English medium schools and the rest of the population.

Still in Indonesia, Lamb's research, reported in Chapter 9, suggests that the social, economic and cultural capital provided by middle class children's home background and their early experiences in school can lead to a 'massive competitive gain' over children from more modest backgrounds. In turn, this can lead to a 'widening economic and cultural class divide' over the long term.

In Chapter 10, Capstick takes an innovative approach to migration by examining in detail the expectations of four young people in Mirpur, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, who are hoping to move to the UK as the spouses (or future spouses) of British citizens of Pakistani origin. Capstick demonstrates that, as a consequence of UK immigration legislation introduced in late 2010, English is being used as a mechanism for controlling immigration. The UK government's argument that the new English language requirement will enable migrants to become actively engaged in their communities seems to be harking back to a mythical ideal of small villages in rural England in which everybody is involved in the local boy scouts and girl guides groups, the Women's Institute, the Young Farmers' Club and so on – an ideal which is reproduced every evening in the radio soap *The Archers*. The reality in urban Britain, where most of the population live, is quite different. Yet Capstick quotes research which suggests that South Asian migrants in the UK do indeed develop 'strong bonds and links' within their own communities and provide active support to each other, possibly to a greater extent than is commonly practised among the majority community. Capstick concludes that English is being given a gate-keeping role, a mechanism for discrimination which contravenes human rights, most glaringly so if it prevents families from living together.

Roles

As we have seen, some of the claims made for English do not seem to be well founded and in certain contexts there may be risks associated with the use of English. So what benefits can English actually bring? Coleman (2010) attempted to identify some of the roles that English has been asked to play in development contexts. He identified four broad areas where there is evidence that English makes a contribution:

- increasing employability

- facilitating international mobility (migration, tourism, studying abroad)

- unlocking development opportunities and accessing crucial information

- acting as an impartial language in contexts where other available languages would be unacceptable.

Unfortunately we cannot always be sure that English will succeed in playing the roles it is given!

Some of the contributors to this volume have confirmed this categorisation. For example, Kennett in Chapter 15, describes the work of the STEPS (Skills through English for Public Servants) project in Sri Lanka, which aims to encourage communication between civil servants at the local level with the public, NGOs, international humanitarian workers and central government. Her project does not merely teach English but integrates this with training in the development of skills needed for negotiation and consensus seeking. Previous projects in Sri Lanka have also endeavoured to encourage the use of English as a means of communication between the two main ethnic groups in the country; examples are the Primary English Language Project or PELP (Hayes 2002) and the Training for ELT Communities Project (Lunt and Hamlyn 2007). Research is needed to establish the extent to which these three projects have managed to achieve long lasting effects, but Kennett has already noted that many of her course participants who originate from different ethnic groups keep in touch with each other after the training has ended.

A second example of English being asked to play an impartial or link language role is given by Tembe and Norton, in Chapter 6. They show that parents in Uganda believe that in a country with multiple languages but no national language, like theirs, English plays a crucially important integrative role.

Negash, in Chapter 8, adopts a muscular position in support of English – as a lingua franca within Africa, in entertainment and the media, in international diplomacy, for commerce and tourism, in migration and in education. Some of these roles are covered in the categorisation proposed by Coleman (2010) but others are additional.

Focho's attempt, described in Chapter 7, to raise the awareness of her students in Francophone Cameroon regarding the benefits of English had only mixed results. By the end of the experiment the students were persuaded that English has value within the education system in Cameroon (for promotion to a higher class and for studying at university) and they also recognised that English is valuable for communicating with native speakers. In other respects, however, the students remain largely unpersuaded.

We have seen already that the Eritrean migrants, described by Hailemariam et al. in Chapter 11, apparently require English in order to maintain contact with their families in Eritrea. For those still in Eritrea, however, English also functions as a means of accessing what the authors term the 'imagined community' of Eritreans

abroad. For those left behind in Eritrea, then, English is part of the dream of life elsewhere.

Recommendations

Kennedy, in Chapter 2, recommends that those working in the area of language and development need to do more 'to understand the complexity of LP [language planning] and development issues' so that they can find ways of managing the complexity.

Seargeant and Erling in Chapter 12 suggest that the discourse of English for international development needs to be challenged. What is needed is detailed research into 'the affordances that actual English use can achieve in specific contexts.'

In Chapter 13, Wedell recognises that – despite the lack of evidence that universal English teaching brings the benefits expected from it – it is important to take steps to ensure that these English programmes are made as effective as possible. For this to happen, he proposes, three issues need to be recognised and taken into account: educational change takes time and effort; schools and classrooms are not uniform in nature; and many different stakeholders are affected by and, in turn, can have an impact on educational change.

Shamim, in Chapter 14, makes three recommendations for the Pakistani context: that children's proficiency in both English and Urdu, the national language, should be improved; that there should be a balance between 'felt needs' and the provision of facilities for learning English; and that there should be wide-ranging debate concerning the relationship between language and development, leading eventually to a practicable policy.

Williams in Chapter 3 suggests that 'effective teaching of English as a subject' is needed in Sub-Saharan Africa, although he seems sceptical as to the likelihood of this happening. Meganathan makes an identical recommendation for India in Chapter 4.

In Chapter 9, Lamb makes three important recommendations aimed at minimising inequality in the provision of English language education in Indonesia. These include using classroom time to encourage all pupils – and especially the more disadvantaged – to critically engage with the English which is already in their environment.

Finally, Whitehead, in Chapter 16, recommends that English language teaching (ELT) in development should be recognised as a specialised branch of ELT. This will require a high level of professionalisation among its practitioners, he suggests. ELT in development should also be characterised by rigorous monitoring and evaluation. Whitehead also makes recommendations for the role of English in fragile states: English must be empowering for those who are learning it and it must not be allowed to replace mother tongues.

Conclusions

The study of Language and Development has a history going back less than 20 years. During that time considerable progress has been made.

■ There has been a clear movement away from simple descriptions of English language teaching projects in development contexts which tended to characterise some of the early Language and Development conferences (see the Language and Development conferences website at **www.langdevconferences. org**). As the contributions to this book demonstrate, people working in the field are now much more likely to adopt a critical perspective towards their work.

■ There is now a greater understanding that English is not the only language that plays a role in the development process. Other international languages, national languages and local languages all have important and complementary roles to play.

■ There is increased awareness that 'development' does not necessarily mean just economic development at a national level. Development has a much broader meaning (see the Millennium Development Goals, Appendix 3).

■ There is increased willingness to question some of the claims that have been made for English as a means to development.

But we still need to learn much more about how development economists, human rights lawyers, educationists other than language teachers and other development specialists look at language and work with language. We need to venture out from the cosy and comfortable world of English language teaching and continue to ask ourselves challenging questions about the value of what we are doing.

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In publishing this collection of papers, *Dreams and Realities: Developing Countries and the English Language*, the British Council seeks to make a powerful contribution to the growing debate about the role of English in the world. The book will be of interest to researchers working in a range of disciplines, such as applied linguistics and development studies, and indeed to anyone with an interest in the complex dynamics of language policy and practice.

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